



For Immediate Release
April 12, 2007
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Milestones and Magnitude

By MSG Mark W. Rodgers
Afghanistan Engineer District

Kabul, Afghanistan – On April 10, the hulking framework of the six-foot-tall steel girders and support beams came to rest on the Afghanistan side of the Oxus River. The bridge is connecting the countries of Afghanistan and Tajikistan for the first time, and both governments will benefit.

The presidents of both countries came out for the ceremonial ground breaking in January 2006. Both governments' demonstrated that support and backing for this \$30 million project is vital to the safe guard of the site, just as much as hiring the local population to do any skilled or unskilled labor.



Bridge assembly continues on the Tajikistan side while bridge approach road construction is under way on both sides.

Photo by MSG Mark W. Rodgers

The process started over four years ago with soil tests and site selection. Involved from the beginning, Brian Walls, project manager and resident engineer for the Konduz

Resident office, has seen firsthand the challenges of working on behalf of two governments that may not always see things the same way. "This project has been challenging on a number of levels," he said. "When we had an earthquake last summer, a local Tajik government official came to the site to find out what we had done.

The Afghanistan-Tajikistan Bridge is scheduled for completion in July 2007. This is all but assured with the girders over the abutments and ready for placement on the permanent bearings.

Once complete, it will span 673 meters with one traffic lane in each direction and an additional path for small carts, bicycles and pedestrians. The bridge is a viable link for both countries and their economic futures.



(Left) The bridge girder assembly rests over the abutment on the Tajikistan side. Exposed to the rear of the assembly are the hydraulic cylinders that pushed the assembly, in increments, the full 673 meters.

(Above) The girder assembly, with the launching nose removed, is poised over the abutment. Jacks are used to raise the assembly off the steel slides in preparation for bearing installation.

Photos by Brian Walls

The bridge will expand the trade route from Pakistan to Tajikistan, cutting the distance to an open sea port by almost half.

Afghanistan is the fifth poorest country in the world and Tajikistan is the poorest of the former Soviet states. Both countries will benefit greatly by any revenue generated from the increased commerce it is sure to bring to Central Asia.

For further information about the US Army Corps of Engineers in Afghanistan, visit www.aed.usace.army.mil